

Missouri State Archives

Finding Aid [998.378]

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Governor Joseph McClurg Collection

Abstract: Two photographs and one document related to Missouri Governor Joseph Washington McClurg (Gov. 1869-1871)

Extent: 3 items

Physical Description: Photographs; Paper

Location: Missouri State Archives; Stacks

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Alternative Formats: TIF

Access Restrictions: Access to original glass plate is restricted

Publication Restrictions: None

Preferred Citation: [item description], [date]; *Governor Joseph McClurg Collection*, Record Group 998.378; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

Acquisition Information: Gifts; Accession #1989-0027; #1989-0028; #1989-0029; #1989-0030; #2011-0054

Processing Information: Processing completed by EW on 05/22/2018. Updated by EW on 03/24/2021 and 02/23/2022..

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Quoted from Finding Aid 3.19 by BC and SEB:

“Joseph Washington McClurg was born in St. Louis County, Missouri Territory on February 22, 1818 to Joseph and Mary Brotherton McClurg. He was orphaned early and was raised in Ohio by his paternal grandparents. McClurg attended Xenia Academy and

Oxford (Ohio) College before teaching school in Mississippi and Louisiana in 1835 and 1836.

“After a stint as sheriff in St. Louis County where he worked for his uncle James Brotherton, McClurg moved to Columbus, Texas in 1839. He studied law, was admitted to the Texas Bar, and served as clerk of a circuit court for the next two years. During this time, McClurg regularly corresponded with Mary Johnson whom he had met in Farmington, Missouri. Mary C. Johnson married Joseph Washington McClurg in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri on October 18, 1841. The couple would have eight children before the death of Mary McClurg and two of her children in 1861.

“William Murphy, the stepfather of Mary Johnson McClurg, was a successful businessman and entrepreneur. McClurg began a commercial association with Murphy and McClurg which would last for years. McClurg caught gold fever in 1849 and traveled to the California gold fields. Operating a successful mercantile in California, he returned to Missouri in 1852, settling in Linn Creek. He joined relatives at Linn Creek on the Osage River to establish a mercantile firm known as McClurg, Murphy and Jones. The site was an ideal steamboat landing and in 1855 a new county seat was established at Linn Creek.

“At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, McClurg organized the Osage Regiment of the Missouri Volunteers and the Hickory County Battalion for the U.S. Army. After the death of his wife in October, he assigned the care of his remaining family to friends and relatives and focused on military matters. Although McClurg attended the emancipation convention in Jefferson City in June of 1862, he did not free his own slaves until just prior to the Emancipation Proclamation.

“The following November, Joseph Washington McClurg was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Radical Republican. He would serve the 5th Congressional District for three terms. McClurg’s espoused strong Unionist views and in retaliation, rebel sympathizers in Linn Creek burned his mercantile twice. By March of 1863, the losses totaled more than \$150,000. His business partner, E. B. Torbert fled to St. Louis with the remaining resources from the mercantile. It would take the governor years to retire his debts and interest payments; and settle with Torbert’s demands for financial compensation over merchandise that McClurg had given in support of the Union.

“Radical Republicans nominated him as their candidate for the 1868 Missouri gubernatorial election. McClurg defeated Democratic Congressman John S. Phelps of Springfield and was sworn in as the 19th Governor of Missouri on January 31, 1869. Among his first acts as Governor, McClurg purged opposition among state employees and required the remainder donate 5% of their salaries to the Radical Republican campaign fund.

“Fiscally conservative, his administration cut the state debt by half. He also recommended passage of legislation forbidding the sale of alcohol; forbade the consumption of alcoholic beverages in the governor’s residence; and accepted no gifts.

Within the first year, Governor McClurg accepted the return of the state seal from former Confederate Governor Thomas Caute Reynolds.

“During his two year term of office, McClurg received members of the Missouri women’s suffrage movement at the official residence and signed their petition; 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving Negroes the right to vote, was adopted in 1870; the Eads bridge at St. Louis was built; the School of Mines and Metallurgy was established at Rolla; and the college of agriculture was located at Columbia.

“Meanwhile, differing governance philosophies lead to increasing strife within McClurg’s Republican Party. Members of the Party disenchanted with Radical restrictions on voting and citizenship rights and realizing that business relationships with former Confederates were crucial to Missouri’s post war recovery, split off and established the Liberal Republican Party. Under the leadership of Benjamin Gratz Brown and with support from the Democratic Party, Brown and Liberal Republicans defeated McClurg and the Radicals in the 1870 gubernatorial election by a landslide.

“In 1871, Joseph Washington McClurg returned to Linn Creek to resume his business enterprises. Along with his sons-in-law Charles Draper and Marshall Johnson, McClurg founded Draper, McClurg and Company. Merchandising profits funded surface mining on lead and iron in the Central Lead District near the Osage River. The firm operated steamboats on the Missouri and Osage Rivers and their landings became trade centers for the shipment of railroad ties. The company gained government contracts for the removal of sandbars on the Osage River. By 1885, falling profits lead to the seizure of one of the steamboats by creditors and within a year, McClurg sold his Camden County properties.

“After a brief spell homesteading in South Dakota, McClurg returned to Lebanon and in 1889, he received an appointment as government land office receiver in Springfield. He returned to Lebanon in 1893 and on December 2, 1900, Joseph Washington McClurg died at the home of Charles and Frances McClurg Draper. He is interred in Lebanon City Cemetery, Laclede County, Missouri.”

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Related Collections

MS308 Rosemary Hammen Schryock Collection
RG3.19 Joseph Washington McClurg, 1869-1871

Additional External Resources

The State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia holds the following collections related to Governor McClurg:

[#C1678 Joseph Washington McClurg \(1818-1900\) Papers](#)

[#C1746 Joseph Washington McClurg \(1818-1900\) Telegram, 1869](#)

[#C3069 Draper-McClurg Family Papers](#)

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1855-1934

Arrangement: Chronological

Scope and Content

Two photographs related to the life of Missouri Governor Joseph McClurg. These photographs have been digitized and placed on Manuscript DVD #4 in Reference.

For access to the glass plate image, patrons should use the digital copy or the copy print in folder 0 below.

Container List

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
			Original framed 7"x9" glass plate negative showing Joseph McClurg, his wife Mary, and two other men at the top of Niagara Falls, New York.	1855
	166	0	5"x7" copy print of the Niagara Falls photograph.	1855
	166	1	Mounted silver photograph of Governor McClurg's former residence, Linn Creek, MO, as it looked in 1934.	1934

DOCUMENT, 1869

Arrangement: N/a

Scope and Content

This is a faded, water-damaged certificate recognizing J.W. McClurg for his service during the Civil War. The certificate is signed by him as Governor, as well as the Speaker of the House, Adjutant General and Lieutenant Governor. The certificate has intricate etchings all around it, including portraits of four men and military scenes.

Container List

Location	Box	Folder	Contents	Date
	OB51	3	19 3/8" x 15 5/8" original certificate. The certificate was mounted on an acid-free heavy paper matte in March 1989 by Columbia Photo. Includes a color replica.	07/04/1869